Pedestrian

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Summary

Pedestrian injuries[1] are the third leading cause of injury death for Washington children 1-9 years old. Pedestrian death rates were highest in two subgroups of children younger than 18: 0-4 years old and 15-17 years old. The majority of pedestrian deaths occurred to children on a driveway or city street by a motor vehicle; however, there were three pedestrian deaths by a train.

Pedestrian injuries may be prevented by supervising children under 10 years old when they are around motor vehicles, teaching children traffic skills, and by creating safe places for children to walk.

Real Stories of Pedestrian Deaths Involving Washington Children

Timothy, age 7, was hit by a truck while playing "chicken" in a busy roadway with five other similarly aged kids. School staff identified a lack of play areas for children near the apartment complex where the death occurred.

Sarah, a 16-month-old toddler, was run over by her father as he backed a pickup truck after she walked behind the vehicle.

Jessica, age 14, was struck by a car as she walked to school. She crossed at an intersection with a marked crosswalk but no traffic lights. The car was speeding and left the scene.

[1] Includes injuries to a person from being hit by a motor vehicle, train or another mode of transportation.

- Adult supervision is vital when a child crosses the street until a child demonstrates traffic skills and judgment. Remember that most children under the age of 10 will not have the necessary judgment and skills to fully understand traffic rules, concepts, distances or speeds.
- Drivers should make sure they have visual contact with young children before backing out of a driveway.
- Take the time to teach children developmentally and age appropriate pedestrian safety strategies:
  - Look left, right, and left again before crossing the street. Cross when the street is clear and keep looking both ways while crossing.
  - Understand and obey traffic and railroad crossing signals.
  - Cross at corners, using traffic signals, crossing guards, and crosswalks when available. Children should be taught to look both ways, and make sure cars have stopped for them before crossing the street at corners or in a crosswalk.
  - Do not enter the street from between parked cars or behind large objects that limit visibility, such as bushes or shrubs.
  - Play in designated areas that are away from traffic and have a physical barrier between the child and traffic.
  - Stop at the curb, or at the edge of the road if there is no curb, before crossing the street. Never run into a street without stopping – even for a ball, pet, or any other reason.
  - Walk facing traffic, on sidewalks, paths, or road shoulder. Walk as far to the left as possible, if there are no sidewalks.
  - Watch for cars that are turning or backing up.
- Children should not walk alone at night. If walking at dusk, dawn, or in the evening is unavoidable, require children to carry a flashlight and wear reflective materials on clothing or a reflective vest.
- Make sure children always take a designated route to common destinations, such as school. Walk with the child to find the safest path.

- Educate and train parents and their children about safe pedestrian skills.

Enforcement

- Advocate for enforcement of state and local laws that prohibit:
  - Failing to yield the right-of-way to pedestrians.
  - Speeding in school zones.
  - Speeding in residential areas.
  - Vehicles from passing school buses while loading and unloading passengers.

Ordinance Development

- Advocate for funds dedicated to safer walking environments (e.g. more pedestrian bridges, streetlights, playgrounds, sidewalks, paths and trails) at the federal, state, and local levels.
- Advocate for community laws and policies that provide physical separation of child pedestrian routes and recreation areas from motor vehicle traffic.
- Advocate for driveway designs that do not require backing up.
- Support policy changes for automakers to install back up sensors to detect young children, warning sounds, or provide better visibility.
- Re-route or place train corridors away from neighborhoods.
- Provide barriers, and audio and visual signals at all road-railroad track intersections.

Number of Injuries[2]

During 1999- 2001, pedestrian injuries were the third leading cause of injury death for Washington children 1-9 years old. Pedestrian injuries in Washington children 0-17 years old account for an annual average of:

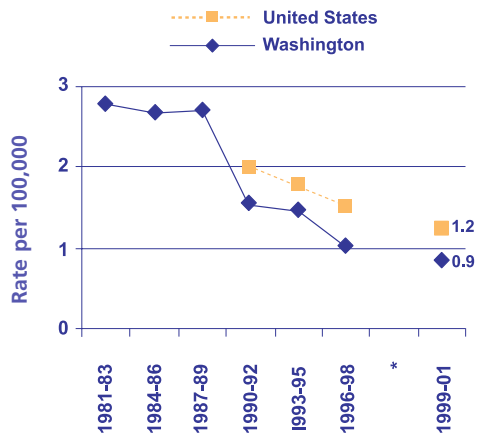
- 13 deaths.
- 116 hospitalizations.
- About 1,240 visits to a hospital emergency department.

Time Trends[3]

From the three-year time period of 1981-83 to 1999-2001, there was a statistically significant decline in pedestrian-related deaths for Washington children 0-17 years old, from 2.8 to 0.9 per 100,000. This represents about a 69 percent decrease in the pedestrian-related death rate.

Pedestrian-related death rates in Washington have been slightly lower than national rates since 1990.[4]

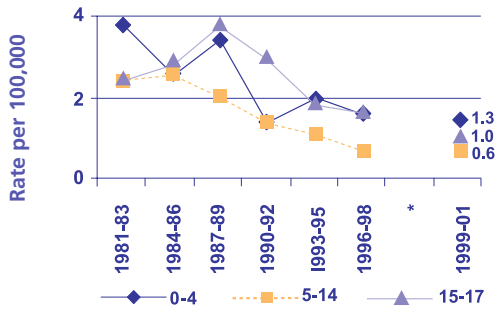
Pedestrian-Related Death Rates Ages 0-17, Washington 1981-2001 United States 1990-2001



* This gap is due to coding changes between 1998 and 1999 which may affect the comparability.

A statistically significant decline in Washington pedestrian deaths was observed in all three age groups (0-4, 5-14, and 15-17).

Pedestrian-Related Death Rates by Age, Ages 0-17, Washington 1981-2001



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Intent

All of the pedestrian deaths and hospitalizations to Washington children 0-17 years old were unintentional.

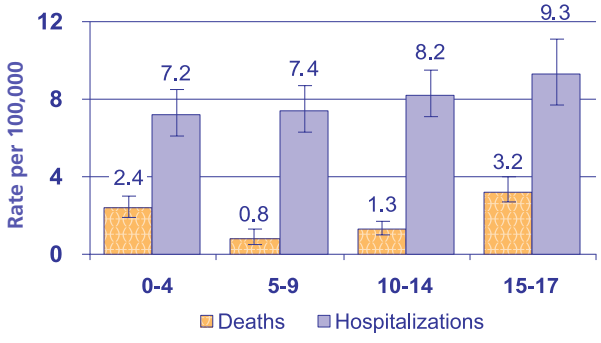
Age and Gender

During 1997-2001, the highest pedestrian-related death rates in Washington were among those 0-4 and 15-17 years old.

Hospitalization rates due to pedestrian injuries among Washington children 0-17 years old were similar in every age group.

Males were 1.6 times more likely than females to be hospitalized due to a pedestrian-related injury.

Pedestrian Death and Hospitalization Rates by Age, Ages 0-17 Washington 1997-2001



[2] Unless otherwise specified, data are for pedestrian injuries among children 0-17 years old during 1999-2001, except in the age and gender section, which is for 1997-2001. Rates are per 100,000 children who are Washington residents.

[3] See Comparability Ratio section in Appendix D.

[4] National injury death rates for children 0-17 years old are not available prior to 1990.

Circumstances Surrounding Deaths From Washington Child Death Review Data

Local Child Death Review teams reviewed 33 out of the 40 pedestrian deaths during 1999-2001. Key findings include:

- Location of the pedestrian deaths:
  - Driveway – nine (27 percent)
  - City street – nine (27 percent)
  - Rural road – five (15 percent)
  - In an intersection – three (9 percent)
  - On train tracks – three (9 percent)
  - Other – four (12 percent)
- Vehicle responsible for the deaths:
  - Truck – 12 (36 percent)
  - Car – 10 (30 percent)
  - Van or SUV – six (18 percent)
  - Train – three (9 percent)
  - Utility trailer – one (3 percent)
  - Unknown – one (3 percent)
- Contributing factors cited in the deaths:
  - Driver error – six (18 percent)
  - Lack of child supervision – four (12 percent)
  - Speed or weather – three (9 percent)
  - Poor judgment – two (6 percent)
  - Road conditions – one (3 percent)
- Two of the drivers (6 percent) who struck and killed a child were teens.
- Impairment by or use of alcohol and/or other drugs was a factor in two (6 percent) of the deaths. The pedestrian youth was impaired in one of the deaths, and the supervising adult in the other death.
- Teams concluded that 85 percent of the 33 pedestrian deaths were preventable, 6 percent were not preventable, and teams were unable to determine preventability for 9 percent.